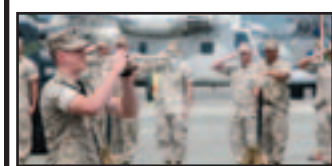


MHawaii MARINE

VOLUME 37, NUMBER 17

THOMAS JEFFERSON AWARD WINNING METRO FORMAT NEWSPAPER

APRIL 27, 2007



Memorial
A-3



Theatre
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Bush: Extra troops will give Iraqi government ‘breathing space’

Army Sgt. Sara Wood
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — About half of the U.S. troops involved in the surge to Baghdad and Anbar province have arrived in Iraq and are beginning their work of providing security so the Iraqi government can move forward, President Bush said here Monday.

“These troops are all aimed at helping the Iraqi government find the breathing space necessary to do what the people want them to do, and that is to reconcile and move forward with a government of and by and for the Iraqi people,” Bush said after a White House meeting with Army Gen. David H. Petraeus, commander of Multinational Force Iraq.

Bush thanked Petraeus for his visit to Washington, during which he is scheduled to brief a joint session of Congress on progress in Iraq. Bush noted that “it’s a tough time” in Iraq, but there has been progress. He called Petraeus “a straightforward man who is implementing a very good plan to achieve our strategic objectives.”

“General Petraeus has taken on a very important assignment for the security of our country and for the peace of the world, and that is to help this young Iraqi democracy become stable, evolve into a country that can defend itself and govern itself, and serve as an ally in this war against extremists and radicals who wish to do us harm,” Bush said.

Bush also again emphasized that he will reject any artificial timetable for withdrawing troops from Iraq. “An artificial timetable of withdrawal would say to an enemy, ‘Just wait them out,’” he said. “It would say to the Iraqis, ‘Don’t do hard things necessary to achieve our objectives;’ and it would be discouraging for our troops.”



Lance Cpl Brandi M Carter

Marines from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 363 Red Lions returned from a seven-month deployment to Iraq last Friday. HMH-363 is a CH-53D Sea Stallion helicopter squadron that was assigned supportive roles for various missions in Iraq.

Red Lions return from 7 month tour in Iraq

Pfc. Brian A. Marion
Combat Correspondent

Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 363 returned home from Iraq in the early morning hours April 20 into the welcoming arms of their loved ones.

The Red Lions, and their small fleet of CH-53D Sea Stallion support helicopters, were deployed to Iraq seven months ago to support air operations and as assault support for multi-national forces in conjunction with I and II Marine Expeditionary Forces.

The unit was “completely successful in their objective of supporting our troops,” said Maj. Thomas Witczak, executive officer, HMH-363.

“Over the seven months, we flew (more than) 4,000 hours and (more than) 3,000 sorties,” said Lt. Col. Allen

Broughton, commanding officer, HMH-363.

“In March alone, we had 843 hours, which is the largest month that a CH-53D squadron has had since Vietnam,” said Broughton.

The Red Lions operated mostly at night, moving cargo, people and providing immediate supply drops on assault support missions, said Broughton.

Just about the only major challenge that the squadron faced was the weather, said Broughton.

The weather ranged from more than 100 degrees Fahrenheit down to below 10 degrees. It was hard on the maintenance personnel on the flight lines to work on the helicopters, with the 24-hour schedule that the squadron ran, said Broughton.

Both Broughton and Witczak said it felt outstanding to be back home, but that the

Red Lions would continue to train.

“We will train as we fight, because what we did in Iraq is just that, we fought as we trained: safely, viscusly, and victoriously,” said Witzak.

“We will continue to train for follow on missions for the third Marine Expeditionary Force and the first Marine Aircraft Wing,” said Broughton.

The squadron and its missions would not have been successful had it not been for the Marines in the squadron. It took cohesion on everybody’s part, from the shops to the flight line, said Broughton.

Broughton also thanked Casey Robbins, the key volunteer coordinator, and the rest of the key volunteers for holding the families of the Marines together through both the long distance and limited communication making April 20 a happy day for some.

Mourning



Sgt. Sara A. Carter

Marines and family members mourn the loss of Lance Cpl. Mario Gonzalez during 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment’s memorial ceremony aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii April 19 for 22 Marines and one Sailor who died in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Marines embrace remembrance of Holocaust

Lance Cpl. R. Drew Hendricks
Combat Correspondent

As part of the Marine Corps Base Hawaii remembrance of the Holocaust, Holocaust survivor Stan Ruben told his story to Marines, Sailors and civilians at the Base Chapel here April 19.

“I am honored to be here and to be able to speak to this illustrious gathering of the crème of the military might,” said Rubens. “You are the children of those that liberated me from the Nazi’s.”

The United States Holocaust Memorial Council, created by an act of Congress in 1980, was mandated to lead the nation in civic commemorations and to encourage appropriate remembrance observances throughout the country. In accordance with this act, this year Marine Corps Base Hawaii proclaimed the week of April 15 through 22 as the Days of Remembrance. This years national theme is “Children in Crisis: Voices from the Holocaust.”

With this in mind the command brought in Stan Rubens, who was only 8 years old at the onset of the Holocaust. Ruben also co-wrote a biography titled “A Boy in Hiding: Surviving the Nazi’s Amsterdam 1940-1945.”

Along with his thanks and gratitude, Ruben shared the story of his life during the harsh days, including the periods where his family hid from and were cap-



Lance Cpl. R. Drew Hendricks

Stan Ruben, a holocaust survivor, shared some of the stories from his book, “A Boy in Hiding: Surviving the Nazi’s Amsterdam 1940-1945,” with Marines and Sailors at the Base Chapel here April 19.

tured by the Nazi Reich.

Ruben is one of at least eight Holocaust survivors living in Hawaii.

According to the Holocaust Memorial Council, this theme was chosen because those victims who were primarily killed first were young children. All Jews were targeted for death, but children were among the most vulnerable victims of the Nazi regime and its collaborators.

Out of the approximate six million Jews killed, more than one million were children.

“The first to perish were the children...from these a new dawn might have risen,” said Yitzhak Katzenelson, Yiddish poet.

After his presentation, many Marines

See HOLOCAUST, A-4

News Briefs

IPAC Closure

The Hawaii Installation Personnel Administration Center, Building 1043, will be secured today at 1 p.m. due to pesticide spraying. The DEERS/ID office located in Building 1044 will remain open during this time.

Marine Security Guard Screening

A Marine Security Guard screening team will be aboard the base May 14-15. Enlisted Marines interested in volunteering for MSG duty should contact their unit career retention specialist as soon as possible.

Lost and Found

There have been several lost personal items that have been found on Marine Corps Base, Kaneohe Bay and turned in to the Criminal Investigation Office, 3rd Street, Building 1095. These items include: Jewelry, bicycles, umbrellas, glasses, watches, clothing, keys, wallets, and other items. For more information, please call Mona Ching, CID, at 257-1305.

DEERS/ID Center appointments

Patrons needing to visit the DEERS/ID Center can now make an appointment by visiting <https://es.cac.navy.mil>. The center, which is open Mondays through Fridays from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., is still accepting walk-ins. The center is located in Building 1044.

Control Your Pet or Lose Privileges

Base Order 5500.15B, Chap. 4, states: "Persons walking dogs in public must have positive physical control of their dogs." Housing handbooks clearly state: "If your pet is leashed outdoors, the leash must be less than 20 feet long, and the animal may not move outside your yard."

If you have questions about pet regulations, refer to the Family Housing handbook or contact your area housing inspector. Additionally, the Game Warden may be of further assistance and can be reached by calling 257-1821.

CLICK IT or TICKET

Hawaii Marine urges its readers to buckle up. It's an easy habit to learn that may some day save your life and the life of your passenger(s). Remember, each and every time you get into your vehicle, reach for your seatbelt. Make it one of those good habits that you won't want to break.

Hawaii Marine Accepts Letters

Hawaii Marine invites its readers to e-mail its editor at editor@hawaiimarine.com with their comments and letters.

All submissions will be edited for clarity and length. Comments must be signed with a full name, and a telephone number must be provided.

Hawaii Marine also accepts news briefs containing relevant information pertaining to Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

Important Phone Numbers:

On-Base Emergencies	911
Military Police	257-7114
Child Protective Service	832-5300
Fraud, Waste, Abuse & EEO	257-8852
Business Management Hotline	257-3188
Pothole & Streetlight Repair	257-2380
Base Information	449-7110
MCBH Duty Chaplain	257-7700
DEERS	257-2077

Hawaii MARINE

www.mcbh.usmc.mil

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FAX: 257-2511, PHONE: 257-8840

Message from the Commandant

Seat belt policy in effect on, off base for Marines

Seat belt use is mandatory for all Marines – whether operating or riding in a motor vehicle, on or off duty, or whether on or off any Department of Defense installation.

Marine Corps Order 5100.19E, "Marine Corps Traffic Safety Program (DRIVESAFE)" is punitive as it relates to seat belt usage. Any violations subject the offender to administrative or disciplinary action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Safety Division is revising DRIVESAFE by the end of April, to ensure commanders have the appropriate tools to keep our Marines safe and increase our ability to hold Marines accountable. The revision will emphasize:

- Seat belts will be worn by all occupants.
- Drivers will not operate any vehicle until

all passengers are wearing seat belts.

-The senior military occupant will not permit the operation on any vehicle until all passengers are wearing seat belts.

-All Marines will sign an acknowledgment attesting to their understanding of DRIVESAFE and its consequences.

-Seat belt compliance reporting procedures will be standardized, to include inclusion in the Inspector General of the Marine Corps Command and Unit Inspection Programs.

Proper seat belt usage dramatically reduces the chance of injury during motor vehicle accidents. Please take care of your Marines and demand strict adherence to this matter.

James T. Conway
General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps



Buckle up, or else

Commandant issues policy on seat belt usage for Marines

Steven Kalnasy
Base Safety Center

What is the first thing you are taught when learning to drive? Most of you will say, "buckle up," right? Seems like common sense, but for some people that mantra has fallen on deaf ears.

Statistics show seat belts contribute to a significant saving of lives when people are involved in motor vehicle accidents, but still there are those who refuse to comply with what is today "the law" in all 50 states.

Since the late 90s, the government has taken a more aggressive approach to enforcing seat belt laws by instituting "Click it or Ticket" programs in their communities. Posting random check

points around patrol areas, along with heavy marketing campaigns informing the public of their intent has worked for the most part to raise the public's awareness to the law, and the repercussions of non adherence.

In the big picture sense, these policies have been effective as more and more citizens are buckling up. However, even with all the attention to public advocacy programs, like the aforementioned provide, there are still those who don't get it.

Because military communities are but a microcosm of the community outside of the confines of the base, the statistics reflecting non use of safety belts also applies.

This fact is not lost on Marine Corps leaders, who have adopted more aggressive practices to direct

Marines and family members across the Corps.

Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. James T. Conway, recently issued a white letter (# XX-07) outlining the Marine Corps' mandatory seat belt policy, which requires all

5100.19E) "Marine Corps Traffic safety Program (DRIVESAFE)", and reminds Marines that failure to adhere to law will result in punitive action under the Uniformed Code of Military Justice.

This policy by headquarters, Marine Corps is not new, but it reflects the commandant's goal to reduce the incidence of unnecessary injury and death to Marines under his command.

Simply stated, the order provides explicit direction to Marines about their responsibilities when driving motor vehicles.

"Proper seat belt usage dramatically reduces the chance of injury during motor vehicle accidents," said Conway in the closing statement of his "White Letter."

Further, the commandant's policy directs commanders to take responsibility for the actions of the Marines under their steed, and reminds them by asking, "Please take care of your Marines and demand strict adherence to this matter."

May 15 marks the beginning of 2007's "Click it or Ticket" campaign aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, and the surrounding community at large.

Although the law does not give room for forgiveness for offenders, it should stand as a promise that your safety is paramount to the Marine Corps, the commandant and military leaders at every level.

When exiting MCBH, the base commanding general asks, "Are your leaders in your vehicles?" This is an important question to ponder as you go about your business each day, because it is a reminder of the symbiotic relationship between the Marine Corps organization and you.

For further information on the commandant's seat belt policy, or "Click it or Ticket," contact the Base Safety Center at 257-1830.



Best of the best



Colonel Mark Dungan, deputy commander, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, hands a trophy to Gunnery Sgt. Henry Pollard, Anderson Hall Dining Facility, Friday. The dining facility was named the best garrison mess hall in the Marine Corps by receiving the Maj. Gen. W.P.T. Hill award.

Weekend weather outlook

Today



Day — Isolated showers after 10am. Partly cloudy, with a high near 82. East wind around 14 mph. Chance of precipitation is 20%.

Night — Mostly clear, with a low around 70. East wind around 14 mph.

High — 82

Low — 70

Saturday



Day — Isolated showers after 10am. Partly cloudy, with a high near 82. East wind around 14 mph. Chance of precipitation is 20%.

Night — Isolated showers. Partly cloudy, with a low around 70. East wind around 10 mph. Chance of precipitation is 20%.

High — 82

Low — 70

Sunday



Day — Scattered showers, mainly after 10am. Partly cloudy, with a high near 82. East wind around 11 mph. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

Night — Scattered showers. Partly cloudy, with a low around 70. East wind around 10 mph. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

High — 82

Low — 70



Sergeant Matthew Koscheski, trumpeter, Marine Forces Pacific Band, plays Taps during 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment’s memorial ceremony aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, April 19 for 22 Marines and one Sailor who died in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Marines, Sailors, families say farewell



Story by
Cpl. Luke Blom
2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment

Photos by
Sgt. Sara A. Carter
Press Chief

It was an emotional event as mothers, fathers, wives, friends and fellow Marines and Sailors listened to the names of 22 Marines and one Sailor, who were killed while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province, Iraq, during a memorial ceremony at the base flight line here April 19.

The 23 service members were part of the Island Warriors of 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment and were killed while conducting combat operations in the Haditha “Triad” – a tri-city metropolitan region on the banks of the Euphrates River in western Al Anbar province and home to approximately 80,000 Iraqis.

“They have made the ultimate sacrifice,” said Lt. Col. James Donnellan, commanding officer of 2/3. “While they are no longer physically in the ranks of 2/3, their memory and legacy is now a permanent part of the Island Warriors.”

The families of each of the fallen Island Warriors were flown in from around the country to be part of the ceremony alongside the Marines their sons, brothers and husbands served with

during their time in Iraq.

“It was really good to be able to talk to the Marines Daniel served with,” said Hannah Chaires, the sister of Lance Cpl. Daniel Chaires, who was killed in action on October 25, 2006. “It made me feel closer to (Daniel) hearing all the stories about him I’d never heard before. It was very comforting.”

As the ceremony began, more than 500 Marines stood tightly in formation as the families were accompanied by friends and fellow Marines of the fallen to witness the memorial ceremony.

After opening remarks and a prayer, Sgt. Maj. Patrick Wilkinson, the senior enlisted Marine in 2nd Battalion, came to the front of the formation and announced the roll call for the fallen one last time.

As Wilkinson read off the names of each of the 23 fallen service members, a pair of boots was placed in front of a rifle placed bayonet first into a wooden pedestal and adorned with a Kevlar helmet on the butt stock and dog tags draped over the pistol grip.

When Wilkinson had read off all the names, each one answered with silence, Donnellan came to the podium to address the Marines and families.

Throughout Donnellan’s speech, he referred to the Battle of Iwo Jima in an effort to put some perspective on 2nd Battalion’s loss. He told the Marines and families how more than 25,000 Americans were killed or wounded in the process of taking the small Japanese held island.

“Where is this war’s Iwo Jima? Where’s this war’s tipping point?” asked Donnellan in reference to a climatic battle to mark the point in which a war turns in favor of the coalition.

He then went on to explain to the families exactly how much the area in Iraq changed for the better and how their sons’ dedication and sacrifice affected the people of the Haditha Triad.

Upon 2nd Battalion’s arrival in the Triad in September 2006, there were a small handful of Iraqi Police, no local governance, high level of violence averaging 13 attacks on coalition forces per day, much of the market district closed due to fear of violence and a local population that was wary of Marine presence in the area.

Through seven months of hard work and the sacrifice of 23 young men, the Triad region made significant steps toward peace and rebuilding.

When 2nd Battalion’s tour in the Haditha Triad came to a close, the local Iraqi Police force grew in strength to more than 200 police officers, attacks on coalition forces dropped to one per day, a largely cooperative local population emerged, numerous reconstruction projects were started and a local government started to take shape.

“Your husbands and sons were ambassadors, police, advisors and overall Marines,” said Donnellan. “They have made a difference in the lives of thousands of Iraqi citizens and made America safer in the process.”

He added, “In the end your husbands and sons made the people respect them more than they feared them, and the enemy fear them more than they hated them.”

In closing, Donnellan relayed a message from the new mayor of Haditha to the families of the 23 men killed securing the Triad. The day Donnellan left the Triad, the mayor pulled him aside with a handshake and a hug and asked him to extend a message of condolence and immense gratitude to the families of the fallen.

“He told me, ‘there are no words in English or Arabic that I can tell you how grateful I am to your Marines for their sacrifices here. I want you to tell the families for me that the people of Haditha will never forget their sons, and we will never forget 2/3 because it was in your time here that Haditha was given hope again,’” said Donnellan.

Before he left the podium, Donnellan conveyed to the families that even though their sons didn’t die in a glorious flag raising like Iwo Jima, their sacrifice was no less courageous or respected



Mario Gonzalez comforts his wife, Anedelia Gonzalez (left) and his son, Lance Cpl. Mario Gonzalez’s fiancée, Delila Ramirez (right).

and that they died while conducting a “worthy mission.”

At the close of the ceremony, the Marines who served with and were friends with the fallen got a chance to talk with the families and extend their personal condolences.

“Jeremy (Lance Cpl. West, killed Nov. 25, 2006) was one of my good friends,” said Cpl. Walter Marinero, infantryman. “I was really happy to meet his parents and it was good to talk to them. I just told them what a great guy he was and gave them a big hug.”

This was the second memorial service for each of the 23 service members, the first of which was held days after each of their deaths in Iraq. The combat memorials were strictly attended by the Marines and Sailors each of the fallen served with.

“This memorial was harder than the ones in country just because it’s heart breaking to see the families hurting so much,” said Marinero. “The memorials in country were more for us (Marines) to say goodbye, but this was 100 percent for the families. My prayers go out to them.”



Marines from 2/3 place a rifle, helmet, boots and dog tags during the memorial ceremony.



Marines from 2/3 pray before they place a rifle, helmet, boots and dog tags of their fallen comrades.

Pace speaks with service members in Afghanistan

Staff Sgt. Thomas J. Doscher,
USAF
American Forces Press Service

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — Extensions, training and congressional support topped the list of topics discussed at a town hall meeting here yesterday with Marine Gen. Peter Pace, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Pace and his senior enlisted advisor, Army Command Sgt. Maj. William J. Gainey, addressed servicemembers from all service branches and answered questions as part of a visit to the air base.

The chairman began the meeting by congratulating the troops and commending them on their actions during the Taliban’s attempted spring offensive. “This year’s spring offensive, you all have them trying to figure out what they’re going to do next,” Pace said.

He took questions on a variety of topics and attempted to settle concerns about media and congressional support for the troops and the war effort. “The American people are with you,” he said. “There are Americans who support the war and Americans who do not. They all support you.

“If you go all the way back to 2001 and remember the initial attacks on Afghanistan and in 2003 the attacks on Iraq, there was 24-hour coverage,” he continued. “Over time, the amount of time on TV allocated to the war has gone down. What gets on television is the bombs going off, not the well being dug. We can either wring our hands about this or realize what the environment is and adjust to it.”

Despite what troops might hear on television, Congress continues



Staff Sgt. Thomas J. Doscher, USAF

Army Capt. Peter Zappola, a member of 23rd Chemical Battalion, shakes hands with Marine Gen. Peter Pace, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, following a town hall meeting April 21 at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. Pace thanked the assembled servicemembers for the difference they make in Afghanistan every day.

to support them in the field, Pace said. “Our Congress has continued to fund everything we ask for,” he said. “They will come to whatever compromise they need to come to, to give us what we need. That’s why you’re here: to protect the right to have those kinds of debate.”

The chairman said troops can help shape that debate by talking to

people when their deployments are complete. “When you come home, talk to some group in your hometown,” he encouraged. “If all of us do that, there will be more Americans who get a bit of information here and bit there.”

Pace also addressed the recently announced extensions that soldiers in U.S. Central Command, which

includes Afghanistan, will now serve. “We did it to stop the just-in-time decisions,” he told the troops, “to stop telling people they’ll be home for 12 months and then nipping away at that.”

The general added that he understands the sacrifices soldiers and their families are making. “It really is the families sacrificing the most

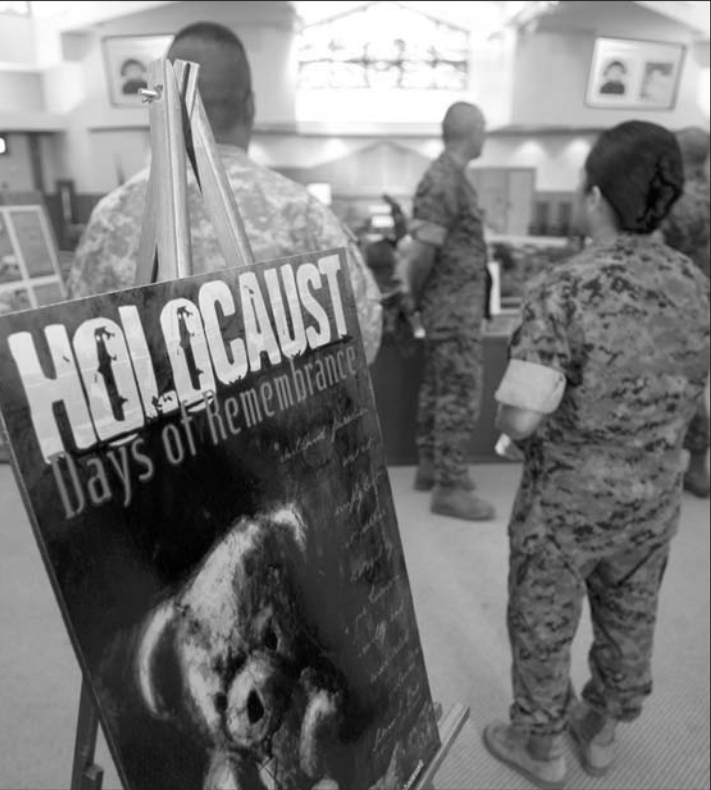
here,” he said. “You know when you’re in danger. They don’t, so they think about you in danger a lot.”

At the end of the town hall meeting, Pace shook all the servicemembers’ hand and thanked them for their sacrifices. “I don’t know how to thank you properly,” he said. “You’re making a difference.”

HOLOCAUST, from A-1

expressed their gratitude to Ruben for his willingness to share his story with them during the remembrance days. Ruben said he was just as grateful, if not more so, for their willingness to listen. As a token of his gratitude, Ruben gave several Marines copies of his book.

“If it were not for the Allied Forces that fought the Nazi Reich and their tremendous effort, well I would not be here today,” said Ruben. “To say thank you would not even come close with-in a fraction to express my thanks.”



Lance Cpl. R. Drew Hendricks

Marines, Sailors and civilians gathered at the Base Chapel here to show their respects and participate in Marine Corps Base Hawaii’s Days of Remembrance for the Holocaust April 19.

Changing over



Lance Cpl. Brandi M. Carter

Sergeant Maj. Steven Morefield (right), Sergeant Major, 3rd Marine Regiment, hands the 3rd Marine Regiment organizational colors to Lt. Col. Owen Lovejoy during a change of command ceremony here April 20. Lovejoy, who is the regiment’s executive officer, was temporarily the commanding officer until the arrival of Col. D. W. White, who will now be the regiment’s commanding officer.



Cherie A. Thurlby

Defense attache U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Dan Eagle, left; Russian General-Major Vladimir Ivanovich Nikishin, deputy chief of international treaties, center; and Russian General-Colonel Vladimir Aleksandrovich Popovkin, commander of space forces, right, greet Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates upon his arrival in Moscow, Monday.

Gates travels to Russia to discuss missile defense

Linda D. Kozaryn
American Forces Press Service

MOSCOW — Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates arrived here Sunday to meet with President Vladimir Putin and other top Russian security officials to discuss U.S. plans to base missile defense assets in Eastern Europe.

The United States, Europe and Russia face a common threat posed by such rogue nations as Iran and need to act cooperatively, a senior administration official traveling with the secretary said on background. Russian officials, however, have downplayed the threat from Iran and have expressed opposition to the plan, he noted.

Along with Putin, Gates is slated to meet with First Deputy Premier Sergey Ivanov, Security Council Secretary Igor Ivanov and Defense Minister Anatoliy Serdyukov. The secretary departed Washington Sunday afternoon, a day after returning from a five-day trip to Jordan, Egypt, Israel and Iraq.

Following President Bush’s decision in January to begin discussions on the missile defense plans, U.S. defense officials announced they were beginning bilateral negotiations with Poland and the Czech Republic to host long-range ground-based interceptors and missile defense radar on their territories.

The plan calls for fielding 10 interceptors in Eastern Europe that would extend the zone of coverage for the potential long-range missile threat from Iran or others in the region, the administration official said. NATO’s missile defense program covers most of Europe for short- and medium-range systems, he added.

Deploying the system is a matter for political debate inside Poland and the Czech Republic, the administration official said, and will have to be approved by each nation’s parliament. U.S. officials welcome an informed debate and are prepared to ensure information is readily available, he said.

U.S. officials have been operating on the principle that U.S. and European defenses should be linked, as they have been in the past, he said. The second principle is to be transparent in the discussions by briefing NATO allies at the North Atlantic Council and the NATO-Russia Council.

Following his visit to Moscow, Gates will meet with officials in Warsaw, Poland, and in Germany, while other U.S. officials meet with senior leaders in the Czech Republic. U.S. officials want to keep the Europeans briefed on their discussions with Russia and vice versa, the administration official said.

Iranian missiles would traverse Russian territory before they reached Central Europe, much less the United States, the official said. U.S. officials want to try to make sure that all have an opportunity to be protected against that threat.

The planned system doesn’t pose a threat to Russia’s nuclear deterrent or threaten Russia in any way, the official stressed. The interceptors are not nuclear-tipped, nor do they have an explosive warhead.

They are purely “kinetic-kill” vehicles that destroy incoming missiles with the energy released by the high-speed impact as the two missiles hit one another, he said.

In Moscow last week, U.S. officials presented some suggestions on how the U.S. and Russia could cooperate on missile defense. They outlined a series of areas where the United States might be able to cooperate with Russia by sharing information and technology. This includes sharing sensor data for early warning, common research and development, and testing of various components of systems, the official said.

Last week at NATO, Russian officials made a presentation downplaying the threat from Iran and raising other concerns.

The official said he does not believe the Russians persuaded many of the allies there that either there was no threat or that the system would pose a threat to Russia. By and large, he said, the allies were very positive about the measures of cooperation that U.S. officials had proposed to the Russians.

The allies understand that there is a threat to which the allies must respond, the administration official said, and everyone agreed this is an issue that should not divide the alliance.

The allies encouraged the United States to persist with the effort, he said, and U.S. officials agreed because they believe it’s the right thing to do. Still, he noted, the discussions have just begun and there will be many more talks and presentations in the weeks and months to come.

Flying high



Sgt. Sara A. Carter

Marines raise an American Flag during the Commanding General's Morning Colors Ceremony here April 20.

=AROUND THE CORPS=

The purpose, effect of using Observation Post Hawk in Iraq

Cpl. Paul Robbins Jr.
1 Marine Expeditionary Force

AR RAMADI, Iraq — Observation Post Hawk is one of 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment’s original posts, standing on the easternmost edge of the battalion’s area of responsibility in West Central Ramadi, Iraq.

The main focus of the Charlie Company-manned OP is to provide security for and around the city’s main medical facility, the Ramadi General Hospital.

Working against a determined enemy, the Marines work side-by-side with Iraqi

Security Forces to return the city’s largest civilian care facility to its people.

Rough Beginnings, Fighting for Control

In the early stages of 1/6’s deployment, the Marines at OP Hawk were kept busy with an area containing an active insurgent presence.

The observation post would sometimes see several small-arms or mortar attacks per day, while Marines and Iraqi soldiers conducted operations to help stem the violence.

“We did a lot of patrols when we first got here to put boots out on the ground,” said

Sgt. Jason E. Wing, 22-year-old sergeant of the guard at OP Hawk. “The area was still heavily contested.”

Insurgent attacks and activity in the area centered near the Ramadi General Hospital, a valuable component in the city’s infrastructure.

The Ramadi General Hospital is the area’s premiere medical facility, with a medical staff of more than 260 doctors and emergency care personnel.

The facility remained available to local citizens and the staff was cooperative with Coalition Forces, but insurgents

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maintained some level of freedom in the hospital as well.

Using intimidation tactics on the staff and residents, insurgents were able to utilize the facility when Marines and Iraqi forces were not in the area.

“The insurgents used to have some freedom in the hospital,” said 1st Lt. Aaron M. Zimmerman, 25-year-old platoon commander at OP Hawk. “They used to be able to bring their wounded into the hospital for care.”

To loosen the grip of the insurgency in the area, the Marines of OP Hawk, assisted by soldiers of the Iraqi army’s 4th Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Brigade, 7th Division, kept constant pressure on the insurgents with observation from fixed positions and regular patrols.

Over the following months, the combined strength of the Marines and Iraqi army made insurgent movement difficult, opening a pathway for civil military operations in the hospital and local neighborhoods.

“Through our operations, we were able to push the insurgents back and open lines of communication with the people,” said Zimmerman, a native of Naples, Fla.

Recognizing the importance of the residents’ cooperation, the Marines of OP Hawk, assisted by a civil affairs team and their Iraqi Army counterparts, began a push to win over the locals with community aid projects.

While continuing to provide a significant security presence in the area, most notably building Iraqi Army guard posts at the hospital, the combined force provided fuel, food, generators, and much needed medical supplies to the hospital and surrounding community.

The continuous aid and support of the local families, com-

bined with a decrease in insurgent activity, caused the majority of people in the area to increase their cooperation with Marine and Iraqi Security Forces.

“The insurgency cannot provide the things we can, so the people quickly realized that they are better off working with us,” said Zimmerman.

Success and Contributions

Now, several months later in the deployment, a large measure of success can be seen in the area surrounding OP Hawk.

The Marines now manning the post measure success by the number of attacks.

“We’ve gone from having several attacks a day in the early stages to, now, not having a single attack in weeks,” said Wing, a native of Lewiston, Maine.

For the residents of the area and Iraqi soldiers securing the hospital, success is shown in their abilities to prevent the insurgents’ return.

“Insurgents can no longer come here discreetly for treatment because my soldiers are here to detain them,” said Maj. Jabbar, 42-year-old commanding officer of 4th Company. “Around here, insurgents cannot even move through the streets because the Iraqi army and Marines are watching.”

Although the efforts of the Marines and Iraqi soldiers at OP Hawk were vital in beginning the process, much of the decline in insurgent activity can be attributed to the battalion’s strategy of installing joint security stations throughout West Central Ramadi.

Through this process, Marines, Iraqi soldiers and Iraqi police establish and operate numerous forward bases in key areas of the city.

These security stations provide an increased security presence and introduce Iraqi Security Forces to the people of the area, which has had a signif-



Cpl. Paul Robbins Jr.

Marines of Company C, 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, leave Observation Post Hawk for a security patrol through West Central Ramadi, Iraq, in October 2006. In the beginning of the deployment, the area around OP Hawk was heavily contested by insurgent forces.

icant impact on insurgent activity.

“After (Joint Security Station) Qatana and OP North went up, it really made a big difference here,” said Zimmerman. “With the decrease in activity, we were able to work with the hospital staff daily.”

While the Marines and Iraqi soldiers at OP Hawk had always assisted the hospital when they could, the opportunity to work with the hospital every day made a significant difference.

“Talking to them every day, we’re able to get them what they actually need, not what we ‘think’ they need,” said Zimmerman.

With solid security in place and continued support from both Marines and Iraqi Security Forces, the local populace has repeatedly expressed their appreciation to the combined force.

“The people are happy because we keep the area under control,” said Jabbar. “They appreciate our efforts and what we’ve done here.”

A Different Role

Nearly complete success in OP Hawk’s area of responsibility has led to a change in roles for the Marines operating there.

In the beginning, Marines led operations to give complete control of the hospital back to the residents and win over the local populace, but now, the Marines are just a helping hand.

“Our purpose here is to assist

the Iraqi Army in maintaining control of the hospital and local neighborhoods,” said Wing. “We’ve gone from a proactive role in security to letting the Iraqi Security Forces take over.”

The Marines’ role in security has been pulled back to standing post at fixed positions and conducting civil military operations to aid the people, allowing Iraqi Security Forces to take the lead on security in the neighborhoods.

In recent months, the majority of boots on the streets are those of the Iraqi army.

With their decreased security

role, the Marines of OP Hawk will remain focused on assisting the staff of the Ramadi General Hospital and working alongside civil affairs Marines to improve the surrounding area.

Although many of the Marines attribute the area’s continued success to their Iraqi counterparts’ hard work, the soldiers of 4th Company say it couldn’t be done without them.

“The cooperation between the Marines and Iraqi soldiers has made Ramadi safer,” said Jabbar. “We could not accomplish as much as we have without the Marines.”